(a) whether the subject of communal harmony is included in Pravasi Bharatiya Meet Scheduled in January, 2006; and

(b) If not, the reasons therefor.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir

(b) PBD focuses issues of interest to overseas Indian and one their engagement in India's development. The participation of delegates from across the world irrespective of their religious, cultural and ethnic diversities symbolizes communal harmony in practice at the global level. It has, therefore, not been thought necessary to have a session on communal harmony, as such, during PBD'06.

Comprehensive legislation for reservation in services

3286. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite repeated recommendations in reports, Government had failed to enact a comprehensive legislation on reservation in services;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the relaxations and concessions provided to the SCs/STs did not make much impact as the shortfall in various posts reserved for them still exists; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) and (b) The Government has already introduced the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes (Reservation in Posts and Services) Bill, 2004 in the Rajya Sabha.

(c) and (d) As a result of reservation and relaxations and concessions available to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Central Government Services (excluding sweepers) as on 1.1.2003 is 16.52 per cent and 6.46 per cent respectively. Some posts reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, however, remain vacant for reasons like non-availability of suitable candidates belonging to these categories etc. There is also generally a time gap between occurence of vacancies and filling up thereof.